INTRODUCTION
Welcome to the first issue of the Euronet Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed of Euronet’s actions and membership and to brief you on relevant developments in the European Union’s and the member states’ policy with regard to children. The newsletter also aims to be a means of communication between NGOs at national level. Therefore, you are invited to report any initiative at national level which is relevant to Euronet’s area of work, preferably by e-mail savechildbru@skynet.be

This newsletter is available in English and French and on e-mail. Euronet partners are encouraged to translate the newsletter in their own language or highlights of it. The Spanish member organisation Funcoe has done this for a number of existing Euronet publications. If you are translating the newsletter please let the Euronet coordinator know. Could you also inform her about any national initiatives which are planned These can be included in the newsletter.

Mieke Schuurman is the new Euronet co-ordinator. She is based in the Save the Children’s office in Brussels and will start full in June, which is 3 days per week. You can contact her on the address above for information on the campaign and for information and support to organise the regional seminars. She speaks English, Dutch, German and French.
What is Euronet? Euronet was formed in 1995 as a loose coalition of networks and organisations who came together to campaign for the interests of children during the revision of the Maastricht Treaty. Among them are the Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE) in Italy, France and the European office, Focus on Children in Ireland, FUNCOE in Spain, Rädda Barnen in Sweden and Save the Children in the UK and the International Save the Children Alliance European Office. Together they shared a common concern about the "invisibility" of children within the European Union. During the course of revising the Maastricht Treaty, members of Euronet were very active in lobbying and representing children's issues to national Governments, MPs, the European Commission and the European Parliament. As a result, for the first time in the history of the EU, children have been given an explicit mention in the new Treaty on the EU concluded in Amsterdam. Euronet has published an analysis of what is in the Amsterdam Treaty for children in English, French and Spanish. Copies are available at the Euronet secretariat (address above).

Euronet now takes this work forward to build a European children's policy and to make children visible in EU policy legislation and programmes. For this work the support and involvement is needed of all the member organisations of Euronet. They have the experience and knowledge of problems facing children. Euronet will be co-ordinating and supporting the member organisations and try to get organisations concerned with children's issues involved across the EU Member States with funding from DG V.

Euronet and its partners have already undertaken activities since the Treaty campaign. These include a seminar on 'Children and the Single Market', which took place in February of this year; a Children's Forum organised by BICE in which a lot of children from all over Europe participated and a Conference in Belfast on Children as European Citizens.

• NEWS FROM THE `CHILDREN ARE EUROPEAN CITIZENS TOO` CAMPAIGN

The campaign `Children are European citizens too` aims to develop and promote a dynamic European policy for children in conjunction with NGO partners in 15 EU member states and to develop and implement a strategy for an EU agenda for action. The campaign is receiving financial support from the Commission (DG V). The newsletter will contain information on the campaign and on how to get involved for national and regional organisations and decision makers.

The `Children as Citizens of Europe` Conference - Belfast, 28 & 29 May 1998
Euronet is co-organising with the Irish organisation Focus on Children the ‘Active Voices, Children’s Choices’, Children as Citizens of Europe conference, taking place in Belfast on the 28th and the 29th of May 1998. This major European conference is held in the framework of the UK Presidency. Next to children’s NGOs, policy makers, academics and politicians, children and young people will participate. In this way children can have an active voice in what should be contained in a European children’s policy and contribute to an action plan. Questions such as what does active citizenship mean for children in the EU and what can the EU do to protect children’s rights will be discussed at the Conference.

For any further information, please contact Sean Lawless at Focus on Children, 13 Gardiner Place, Dublin, tel + 353 1 878 87 08, fax +353 1 878 87 34, e-mail foc@iol.ie or Sharon Thompson, Conference Office, 216 Belmont Road, Belfast BT4 2AT, N. Ireland, tel +44 1232 651 099, fax +44 1232 650285.

Defining the European Agenda for Children: The Regional Seminars

As part of Euronet’s campaign, four regional seminars will be organised to stimulate discussion on a European children’s agenda on a regional level. The seminars play a crucial role by involving national NGOs in shaping a European children’s policy. Each newsletter will keep you informed on the organisation of the regional seminars by other organisations and how you can get involved.

Euronet’s researcher is Sandy Ruxton. He is already known to many people for his major study for DG V called ‘Children in Europe’. By carrying out interviews and going to the regional seminars, organised by the national member organisations of EURONET, he is collecting input for Euronet’s report on a European Children’s Policy. This report will be presented on a major conference in Brussels around Children’s Rights Day in November of this year.

Sandy Ruxton has produced a first paper to use as a basis for discussion in the regional seminars. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child serves as a basis and discussion paper for the emerging challenges for the EU and their impact on children. The following points are included:

- **the development of European citizenship.** Children are excluded as European citizens. Children’s experiences of modern life and their views should be taken into consideration to make them participate as full European citizens.

- **the Economic and Monetary Union.** The rights and needs of children should be accorded greater attention in economic policy making for the well-being both for children and families.

- **the enlargement of the European Union.** The accession of countries from central and eastern Europe will have significant repercussions for children. The EU could play a crucial role in helping to rebuild child welfare and
protection systems in central and eastern Europe. There are fears that the removal of frontier controls will lead to the growth of dangers for children, such as child trafficking.

- **the pressures for welfare reform.** The need for welfare reform is there, but this must be done in a way that defends children’s rights and enables them to reach their full potential.

- **children’s rights.** These should be recognised in the EU as full citizens rights.

- Next to these challenges the paper goes into more detail on issues such as employment, social exclusion, consumers and the single market, environment and health, violence and crime, supporting children within families and education.

For more information on the organisation of the regional seminars you can contact the Euronet co-ordinator or the organising organisation.

- Partners from Belgium (Wallonia), France and Luxembourg will be invited to a seminar organised by BICE France in September. For more information contact the co-ordinating organisation: Christine Benaim at BICE France, 19, rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris, tel +33/1 44 39 20 00, fax +33/1 45 44 83 43, e-mail: “bice@club-internet.fr”.

- FUNCOE is co-ordinating the organisation of the Southern Europe seminar, which is open to participants from Spain, Portugal and Italy. This seminar will take place on 22 June in Madrid. The main themes for the seminar will be the protection of children as consumers and children’s citizenship in Europe. More information can be obtained from: Purificación Llaquet Baldellou at FUNCOE, Plaza Puerto Rubio, 28, E-28018 Madrid, tel. +34/1 513.05.00, fax. +34/1 552.32.72, e-mail: “FUNCOE@mad.servicom.es”.

- For the partners from Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands, a seminar will be held in Vienna on 2 October 1998. This seminar will be organised by Rettet das Kind in the framework of the Austrian EU Presidency. For more information contact: Dieter Wesenauer at Rettet das Kind (Save the Children Austria), Pouthongasse 3, A-1150 Vienna, tel. +43/ 1 982 62 16, fax. +43/1 982 46 64 17, e-mail: “rettkind@magnet.at”

- A date and venue for the Northern Europe group seminar, open to the NGOs and decision-makers from the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Denmark will be communicated shortly. For more information contact: Bill Bell at Save the Children UK, 17 Grove Lane, UK - London SE5 8RD, tel: +44 171 70354 00, fax: +44 171 7035745, e-mail: “b.bell@scfuk.org.uk”.

**Input from the national partners**

This section provides information on what the partner organisations are doing.

Kind en Samenleving: a Belgian member organisation of Euronet is writing about one of the activities of its organisation:
Euronet’s members are becoming more active within the EU-context. In February there was the creation of a European Network for Children’s Play (ENCP). NGOs working in the field of children’s play from Spain, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece and Belgium met in Germany and again in May, where NGOs from Portugal and France joined the network. The network gets the support from the International Play Association, officially: International Organisation for the Child’s Right to Play.

We want to create a Network for Children’s Play, aimed at improving the play situation of children in the EU by exchanging knowledge and best practice and by joining forces towards specific priority actions. In addition, we want to influence the EU policy through lobbying through EURONET.

For more information please contact:
ENCP, p/o Jan van Gils, Nieuwelaan 63, B-1860 Meise, Belgium
tel. +32/2 269 71 80; fax: +32/2 269 78 72; e-mail: “kindsl@club.innet.be”

• NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Draft budget of the European Union for 1999 and implementing the 1998 budget

Before 1998, children had only 3 MECU in the total European budget. For the 1998 budgetline “measures for the family and children” doubled and half of it goes to children. The first draft budget of the European Commission for 1999 has been published and contains a cut in the family and children line. However, the European Parliament also has a strong influence on this and can increase the draft budget of the Commission. Euronet will be working on it to obtain the same result for the 1999 budget.

Following the earmarking of a budget for children in the 1998 budget, the Commission has now issued a call for proposals for funding for projects promoting the rights of the child. The call for proposals is issued under the budgetline B3 4108 “Measures in favour of the family and children with a view to the exchange of information and experience”. Euronet welcomes the fact that the call for proposals states: “The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child takes the first steps towards the recognition of children as ‘people in their own right’ and although this Convention can be regarded as a victory in itself, it is also the starting point for much more work to be done.”

The call for proposals specifically invites projects that “promote the protection of children and the safeguarding of their rights” and projects to promote “exchange of experience, information and practices amongst Member States on subjects connected with the family and protection of children.” It covers projects within the European Union only and should be of particular interest to NGOs and others who wish to collaborate on projects.
Application forms and further details are available from European Commission, DG V, Unit D/5, J 37, 1/20, Rue de la Loi 200, B 1049 Bruxelles. Deadline for projects to start on 15 September is 15 July.

- **EURONET THEMES**

**The ‘Children and the Single Market’ seminar**

In February Euronet with Lyndon Harrison MEP organised a seminar on ‘Children and the Single Market’ in the European Parliament. The seminar was attended by a number of Commission officials, MEPs, and NGOs from different member states and provided a useful opportunity for an exchange of information. Lyndon Harrison will also contribute to a workshop in Belfast at the Conference ‘Active voices children’s choices’. The conclusions and recommendations of the seminar highlighted the lack of coherence in EU policy towards children with responsibility falling into a number of different areas of the Commission’s work and the need for the EU to actively support and encourage implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and use it as a framework for its work on children.

A briefing “The Single Market - What’s in it for Children?” from the seminar has been produced in English. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this document, please contact Mieke Schuurman at the Euronet office (details at the first page of the newsletter).

**Meeting between MEPs, NGOs and the UK Health Minister**

The seminar was followed up by a meeting between MEPs, NGOs and Paul Boeteng - UK Health Minister in the framework of the UK Presidency of the European Union. Paul Boeteng who is responsible for children’s issues for the EU during the UK Presidency said that the competence for children’s issues lies at Member State level. He was positive about the Daphne programme, which focuses on violence against women and children, and the role the EU plays in the exchange of good practice.

**Austrian Presidency comments to putting childrens’ issues on the agenda.**

Good news is that the Austrian presidency, which takes over from the UK on 1 July this year, will focus on “Participation of children and young people” as one of the central tasks to be undertaken in the process of shaping European society in political, social and economic terms and in involving the young citizens in the process of European integration. Within this framework the Austrian government will
explore the possibilities of actively involving young people, with and without organised structures, in its decision-making processes and to ensure due consideration of the interests of young people. Euronet hopes too have a similar meeting as with the UK Minister in the European Parliament with the Austrian Minister and NGOs to discuss in more depth the European dimension of the participation of children.

**BICE's Children's Forum**

On the 18th of March BICE, one of the international NGOs of Euronet, organised a meeting of children and young people from all countries of the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe in the European Parliament. The overall results of the Forum were positive and the children’s response was a desire to get involved and participate in the European children’s work.

There are several actions which will follow-up the Forum. An exchange of information will take place on national levels to encourage the participation of children and a web site for children will be set up for the exchange of information. In addition, some national groups hope to organise national forums for children and in Southern Europe a regional workshop supported by different Ministries will be organised on the participation of children. BICE will also try to get Central and Eastern European countries more involved in the childrens’ work.

For more information about BICE or the results of the Children’s Forum, please contact Luisa Maria Aguillar at BICE, 32 Rue du Spa, B 1000 Bruxelles, tel + 32 2 280 03 91, fax + 32 2 230 1133, e mail: “pub00390@innet.be”.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

- 28-29 May 1998: Belfast
  ‘Putting Children at the Centre’, conference in the framework of the UK Presidency to promote a EU policy for children
- 4-5 June 1998: Valencia (Spain)
  Preventing child sex abuse, organised by FUNCOE.
- 11 June 1998: Bath (UK)
  Annual conference of the European Forum for Child Welfare: ‘Europe’s Children: Their Hopes and Fears’
- 22 June 1998: Madrid
  Regional Seminar of EURONET organisations from Spain, Portugal and Italy.
- 2 October 1998: Vienna
  Regional Seminar from the EURONET organisations in Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands.
- October 1998: Florence,
  Conference on child’s use of leisure and free time, organised by BICE, Italy.
CALENDAR OF EU-PRESIDENCIES:

Enclosed is a calendar to note down when your country is chairing the EU.

January - June 1998: UK  
July - December 1998: Austria  
January - June 1999: Germany  
July - December 1999: Finland  
January - June 2000: Portugal  
July - December 2000: France  
January - June 2001: Sweden  
July - December 2001: Belgium  
January - June 2002: Spain  
July - December 2002: Denmark  
January - June 2003: Greece  

LIST OF EURONET PUBLICATIONS

- Treaty briefing (on the Amsterdam Treaty) in English, French and Spanish
- A Proposal and Invitation: Building a Europe with and for children, in English, French and Spanish.
- The Single Market - What is in it for Children?, in English
- Active Voices, Children’s Choices - Children as Citizens of Europe by Sandy Ruxton (researcher Euronet): a Discussion Document, in English
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